

CHRI 2016

# Easier Said Than Done

Pursuing promises at the United Nations Human Rights Council

## Sierra Leone



**CHRI**  
Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

Working for the practical realisation of human rights  
in the countries of the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) is an independent, non-partisan, international non-governmental organisation, mandated to ensure the *practical* realisation of human rights in the countries of the Commonwealth. In 1987, several Commonwealth professional associations founded CHRI. They believed that while the Commonwealth provided member countries a shared set of values and legal principles from which to work and provided a forum within which to promote human rights, there was little focus on the issues of human rights within the Commonwealth.

CHRI's objectives are to promote awareness of and adherence to the Commonwealth Harare Principles, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other internationally recognised human rights instruments, as well as domestic instruments supporting human rights in Commonwealth Member States.

Through its reports and periodic investigations, CHRI continually draws attention to progress and setbacks to human rights in Commonwealth countries. In advocating for approaches and measures to prevent human rights abuses, CHRI addresses the Commonwealth Secretariat, Member Governments and civil society associations. Through its public education programmes, policy dialogues, comparative research, advocacy and networking, CHRI's approach throughout is to act as a catalyst around its priority issues.

CHRI is based in New Delhi, India, and has offices in London, UK and Accra, Ghana.

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## INTRODUCTION

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### WHAT IS THE *EASIER SAID THAN DONE* SERIES OF REPORTS?

The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) has been monitoring the behaviour of Commonwealth countries at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) since the Council's inception in 2006. CHRI has used the *Easier Said than Done (ESTD)* series to report on the performance of Commonwealth members of the UN Human Rights Council, in the context of their domestic and international human rights obligations.

The benchmark for countries' behaviour is their own pre-election pledges, made while standing for election to the Council. These pledges frequently include commitments to promote and protect human rights internationally, domestically and, specifically, at the Council. *ESTD* uses voting records, statements, and information on engagement with the UNHRC special procedures and compliance with the UN treaty bodies to document the extent to which Commonwealth members of the Council comply with these pre-election pledges.

The *ESTD* reports are principally published for an audience of diplomats, government officials, civil society organisations and international policymakers. They are designed to be of use in formulating policy and advocating for greater respect for human rights, both domestically and internationally.

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### WHY DO THE *EASIER SAID THAN DONE* REPORTS FOCUS ON COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES?

The Commonwealth as a block is an under-assessed component of the Council. During any particular year, about a quarter of the UN Human Rights Council is comprised of Commonwealth States. The Commonwealth has a diverse membership which spans the entire globe. All Commonwealth Members have made a commitment to fundamental principles of human rights on numerous occasions through a variety of organisational documents and communiqués. Most notably, this commitment was demonstrated in 2013 with the signing of the Commonwealth Charter. The Charter makes a specific commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights:

“We are committed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant human rights covenants and international instruments. We are committed to equality and respect for the protection and promotion of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, for all without discrimination on any grounds as the foundations of peaceful, just and stable societies.

We note that these rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and cannot be implemented selectively. We are implacably opposed to all forms of discrimination, whether rooted in gender, race, colour, creed, political belief or other grounds.”

With this foundation, the Commonwealth should be a force to further the mandate of the UN Human Rights Council. However, taken as a whole, the Commonwealth block often fails to live up to these principles. Failure to comply with this fundamental organisational commitment jeopardises the integrity of the Commonwealth and has the potential to negatively impact the work of the UN Human Rights Council.

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#### HOW IS THIS REPORT STRUCTURED?

Each report begins with an examination of the Commonwealth’s performance as an intergovernmental body and as a grouping within the Council.

Pages 19-23 present data on three important measures of a country’s involvement in the UN human rights system: ratification of the core UN human rights treaties, compliance with treaty reporting obligations, and cooperation with the UN Human Rights Council’s special procedure mandate holders. These metrics are presented for all Commonwealth countries present on the Council during the reporting period.

Pages 24-47 detail the country’s performance and voting patterns at all the Council sessions that occurred during the reporting period. It also compares the performance of each State with its pre-election pledges regarding engagement with the Council, special procedures and treaty bodies. This section may also mention a domestic pledge if it is highly specific (e.g. a pledge to pass a particular law or create an institution).

The reports also have two annexes. One lists the links to the countries’ pledges, while the other is a table that sets out Commonwealth voting patterns during the review period.

## WHAT IS THE REPORTING PERIOD AND WHICH COUNTRIES ARE UNDER CONSIDERATION?

Each report in the 2016 series focuses on one Commonwealth Member of the Council during the 2014, 2015, and January 2016 sessions (Session 25-Session 31). Though usually an annual production, no *ESTD* reports were published in 2015, necessitating a longer reporting period.

The five countries this edition of *ESTD* focuses on are Botswana, India, Namibia, Pakistan, and Sierra Leone. These countries were selected because they share many traits common to Commonwealth countries: they are in Asia and Africa (home to the preponderance of Commonwealth countries), they are developing countries whose foreign and domestic policies are often necessarily shaped by resource and capacity constraints and global inequities, and they are electoral democracies whose constitutional principles are to greater or lesser degrees in tension with on-going issues with inequality, corruption and rule of law. On the other hand, these countries often differ in key ways—including, as will be seen in these reports, in their orientation towards the Council and international human rights generally.

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## WHAT SOURCES OF INFORMATION WERE USED TO COMPILE THESE REPORTS?

These reports use research based exclusively on secondary sources. All the information regarding Council statements, voting activity, engagement with the Special Procedures, treaty ratification and reporting obligation compliance came from the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) and is publicly available on its website (access to statements to the Council requires registering an account with the Council's extranet). Pledge documents, as mentioned above, are linked in the annex, and are quoted at length in the pre-election pledge (pages 19-21).

# THE COMMONWEALTH AND THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

## Q & A ON THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

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### WHAT IS THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL?

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC or the Council) is an intergovernmental body within the UN system comprising 47 elected Member States. The Council was established in June 2006 to replace the former UN Commission on Human Rights. The Council has the primary responsibility for the promotion and protection of human rights at the UN. The Council holds three regular sessions annually and special sessions as required by human rights situations that require urgent attention. Unlike its predecessor, which was a subsidiary body to the Economic and Social Council, the Human Rights Council is a subsidiary organ of the UN General Assembly. The Council has absorbed mechanisms of the former Commission, such as the Special Procedures and Complaints Procedure, while including new mechanisms: the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the Advisory Committee. In another departure from the practices of its predecessor, the Council has a re-formulated regional division of seats that provides for greater representation of Southern States. Its election process is also different; states may release pre-election pledges and then must secure an absolute majority of votes in the General Assembly (held by secret ballot) to be elected.

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### WHY WAS THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHED?

The Council was established to replace the discontinued and largely discredited United Nations Commission on Human Rights (the Commission) that was established in 1946. Despite several contributions and decades of setting international standards on human rights, the Commission was criticised for being an overly political and selective body. Numerous states with poor human rights records were able to sit on the Commission and, once there, work to block meaningful action on serious human rights abuses.

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### HOW ARE COUNTRIES ELECTED TO THE COUNCIL?

The Council's 47 seats are allocated by regional grouping (13 for Asian States, 13 for African States, six for Eastern European States, eight for Latin American and Caribbean States and seven for

Western European and Other States) for three-year terms. Every year new countries vie for seats within each regional grouping – the number of seats available depends on the number of countries from each grouping departing the Council. Countries may only run for two consecutive terms. A country must obtain an absolute majority of votes from the UN General Assembly to be elected to the Council. If no country within a regional grouping receives an absolute majority of votes, then a second round of voting takes place between high-scoring candidates. Recently, however, there has been a trend of regional groupings running closed slates – with the number of countries running matching the number of open seats – to avoid embarrassing countries that lose out to other countries from the same region.

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### WHAT IS A PLEDGE AND WHAT DOES A PLEDGE USUALLY ENTAIL?

A country running for election to the Council can submit pre-election pledges while presenting their candidature. Ideally, the pledge document is intended to be used by voting countries to determine which candidate best fits the criteria for election to the Council, i.e. which country has made the greatest contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights and is willing and capable of playing an effective role at the Council. Pledges usually list a country's past contributions to the promotion and protection of human rights, and future voluntary commitments towards the same. The commitments made in each country's pre-election pledge are also intended to be used as a partial basis for that country's Universal Period Review. For reference, electronic links to these pledges can be found in Annex 1 of this report.

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### IS THE PLEDGE-MAKING PROCESS REGULATED?

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has published a document that outlines suggested elements for voluntary pledges and commitments, but these guidelines are not binding; nor are they exhaustive. The suggested elements include national and international human rights contributions, pledges and commitments.<sup>1</sup> Because the pledge-making process is neither regulated nor standardised, there is little consistency between countries, although pledges to support the work of the Council and its subsidiary mechanisms are common, as are pledges to uphold the highest standards of human rights domestically. Unfortunately, pledges also tend to be vague and unquantifiable, making the measurement of achievements and benchmarking especially difficult.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Suggested Elements for Voluntary Pledges and Commitments for Candidates for Election to the Human Rights Council," n.d., <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/Pledges.pdf>.



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## ARE COUNTRIES BOUND BY THEIR PRE-ELECTION PLEDGES?

There is currently no accountability mechanism to ensure compliance with pre-election pledges. That being said, the General Assembly does have the ability to suspend Council Members who have seriously and consistently breached their international human rights obligations. Libya was suspended from the Council in March 2011 as a result of a violent crackdown on anti-government protestors; however Libya had not made any specific pledges regarding its domestic human rights situation before its election to the Council. There is therefore no example of a State's membership of the Council being affected as a direct result of violating an election pledge.

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## WHAT IS THE POSITION OF THE COMMONWEALTH AT THE COUNCIL?

Since the establishment of the Council in 2006, the share of sitting members who are also Commonwealth states has generally been 20-25% in any given year. The Commonwealth, through its Secretariat, has undertaken several initiatives with respect to technical assistance on the UPR. The Commonwealth has also established a "Small States" office in Geneva in order to provide subsidized office space to its smaller Members who do not have a permanent presence in Geneva, thereby facilitating their participation at the Council.

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## IS THE COUNCIL AN EFFECTIVE MECHANISM TO PROMOTE RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND TO ADDRESS MAJOR ABUSES?

To date, the Council appears to be battling issues similar to the ones that plagued the Commission. During a speech at the celebrations for the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 2008, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon urged the Council to "rise above partisan posturing and regional divides" and to "address human rights abuses wherever they occur". For the most part, this plea has not been borne out. Many members continue to vote on the basis of regional groupings and/or political alliances. Major human rights abusers still sit on the Council, and the responses to several serious abuses have been undermined by politicization. Though many Commonwealth countries voluntarily pledged to promote and work positively to support the Council before their election, Commonwealth Members tend to be a part of the negative patterns identified above.

Voting on controversial country-specific and thematic resolutions continues to be divided along regional voting lines and/or dictated by political alliances. A number of Commonwealth countries are openly opposed to country-specific scrutiny at the Council and frequently either abstain or

vote no when such resolutions come to a vote

Despite these issues, the Council has achieved a degree of success in providing a forum for debate on global human rights issues. It has facilitated significant engagement of civil society in its processes. It has also managed to unite its Members around several key concerns, passing resolutions calling for action or expressing commitment to a range of issues from the protection of human rights defenders to holding perpetrators to account for human rights abuses.

## THE COMMONWEALTH AT THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: AN ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY BEHAVIOUR

This round of reports, which cover 2014 and 2015 as well as the first session of 2016, continue to demonstrate the discouraging picture highlighted by their predecessors regarding the performance of Commonwealth members as a whole at the Council. The potential for Commonwealth countries to actively contribute to the promotion, protection and realisation of human rights, both at home and at the Council has still not been fulfilled. At the same time, a more mixed picture emerges when the record is examined on a country-by-country basis, with some delegations acting more constructively than others.

These reports demonstrate the following important patterns in the behaviour of Commonwealth countries at the Council:

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### SHARP DIVISIONS ON COUNTRY-SPECIFIC SITUATIONS

It was evident that several Commonwealth countries remained reluctant to take positions on individual country situations. This approach significantly impeded the Council from effectively responding to the most egregious human rights violations.

Of particular concern was the position taken by the Commonwealth bloc when the situation of one of its Members came under the scrutiny of the Council. In March, 2014, Resolution 25/01, “Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka,” was supported by only three Commonwealth countries; Botswana, Sierra Leone and the United Kingdom. India, Namibia and South Africa abstained from the vote, while Kenya, Maldives and Pakistan voted no. This voting pattern mirrored the Commonwealth’s unwillingness to aggressively speak out on the dire human rights situation in the country, emblemized by the Secretariat’s decision to hold the 2013 CHOGM in Sri Lanka despite widespread outcry and the boycott of several Heads of Government.

Commonwealth members consistently rendered split decisions voting on other countries as well. In Session 31 alone, Commonwealth countries disagreed significantly on resolutions concerning Syria (31/17; 4 yes, 6 abstentions), Iran (31/19; 2 yes, 4 no, 4 abstentions), and Palestine (31/34; 8 yes, 2 abstentions). In addition to further splits on other votes concerning these three countries of perennial concern, in the prior year (2015) Commonwealth members also failed to find consensus on Belarus (29/17; 4 yes, 1 no, 7 abstentions), Ukraine (29/23; 6 yes, 6 abstentions), and North Korea (28/22; 5 yes, 7 abstentions).

In oral statements, several Commonwealth countries also called for the Council to diminish or end its focus on individual countries and raised concerns about the use of the forum for “particular agendas,” which could be construed as an attempt to block scrutiny of politically sensitive human rights situations.

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#### LACK OF CONSENSUS ON FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

Among the more disturbing patterns in the behaviour of Commonwealth countries was a failure to achieve unanimity on the most basic human rights and civil liberties issues. Resolution 25/38, “The promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests,” garnered no votes from Kenya, India, South Africa and Pakistan, as well as an abstention from Namibia. Two countries (Nigeria and South Africa) abstained from voting on Resolution 28/14, “Human rights, democracy and the rule of law.” Resolution 31/32, “Protecting human rights defenders, whether individuals, groups or organs of society, addressing economic, social and cultural rights,” earned a no vote from Nigeria and abstentions from Kenya and Namibia.

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#### CONTINUING CONTROVERSY OVER THE DEATH PENALTY AND LGBT RIGHTS

Two major policy divisions in the Commonwealth that were visible at the Council were over the death penalty and LGBT rights. During the period covered in these reports, two votes were held on the “The question of the death penalty,” (26/02 and 30/05) and each produced split results (4 yes, 3 no, 2 abstentions on the former; 4 yes, 5 no, 3 abstentions on the latter).

In terms of LGBT rights, Resolution 27/32, “Human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity,” divided Commonwealth members (2 yes, 4 no, 3 abstentions). Two “Protection of the Family” resolutions, which could be construed as exclusionary to LGBT persons, earned significant support (26/11; 8 yes, 1 no) (29/22; 10 yes, 2 no).

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## EMPHASIS ON THE NEEDS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

Many Commonwealth countries were active in advocating for a greater focus on the right to development and the interrelation between civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. While the attention to development appears at times to be an attempt to distract from the more politically sensitive political and civil rights issues, it also adds an important, holistic human rights perspective from the developing world. Commonwealth countries also repeatedly raised points about the need for greater financial contributions to the Council and continued support for its technical assistance efforts.

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## PARTICIPATION

Commonwealth countries have room to improve when it comes to participation in Council activities. Universal Rights Group recorded the following level of participation, defined as the proportion of meetings to which a country submitted an individual or joint statement, for the five countries covered in this report series during Sessions 23-31 (June 2013-March 2016)<sup>2</sup>:

<b>Country</b>	<b>Panels</b>	<b>Interactive Dialogues</b>	<b>General Debates</b>	<b>Average</b>
Botswana	7%	37%	26%	23%
India	42%	24%	44%	37%
Namibia	41%	15%	16%	24%
Pakistan	36%	14%	26%	25%
Sierra Leone	56%	40%	32%	43%

It is difficult to set a benchmark for what constitutes a “good” level of participation, given the wide variance in resources among the Council members. However, it is worth noting that of these five countries it was Sierra Leone, by far the poorest in terms of GDP/capita, that sustained the highest level of participation. The Council would benefit if members sought to participate more in its proceedings, even given current constraints of time, personnel and finances.

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## A LACK OF COMMITMENT TO PROMOTING COMMONWEALTH VALUES AT THE COUNCIL

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<sup>2</sup> Entries for each country can be found at <http://yourhrc.org/interactive-map/>.

The Commonwealth Charter, signed in 2013, sets out the values of the association, committing its members to the principles of peace, democracy, justice, development, equality, human rights and inclusivity. Unfortunately, the record suggests their actions are sometimes dictated more by political expediency and indifference to or unwillingness to deal with human rights abuses than a thorough commitment to these values. It exemplifies the need for the Secretariat to work proactively to ensure adherence to the Charter, rather than acquiesce to members' lack of regard for the Commonwealth's fundamental ideals.

## THE ROLE OF THE OFFICIAL COMMONWEALTH AT THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

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### ENGAGEMENT

The Commonwealth mandate to engage with the Council was initiated at the 2007 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). As a result of lobbying by the Commonwealth Human Rights Forum, a meeting of civil society groups, the Heads of Government decided that the Commonwealth Secretariat could, through the Council, play a facilitating role in strengthening dialogue on, and raising awareness of, human rights in Commonwealth countries. Since the Human Rights Council began operating in 2006, CHRI has urged the Commonwealth and its members to actively support the Council in the fulfilment of its mandate. The earlier reports in the *Easier Said Than Done* series have noted that the Council should be considered one of the most important global fora for the Commonwealth, and to this end identified two important avenues through which the Commonwealth could make a serious impact at the Council:

1. By providing technical assistance to Commonwealth countries that wish to engage with the Council and its mechanisms.
2. By building consensus among like-minded countries during deliberations at the Council.

To date, Commonwealth engagement with the Council has largely focused on the first avenue, with a predominant emphasis on providing technical assistance to Commonwealth countries as they engage with the Universal Periodic Review mechanism. Since early 2008, the Human Rights Unit of the Commonwealth Secretariat has run several UPR capacity-building training sessions across the Commonwealth for governments, parliamentarians, national human rights institutions and civil society. These meetings have primarily been a forum to share best practices and experiences. Best practices taken from a selection of these meetings were compiled into two volumes by the Human Rights Unit: *Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights: Towards Best Practice*, which shared early experiences with the UPR; and *Universal Periodic Review: Lessons*,

*Hopes and Expectations*, which provided an update half-way through the first cycle.

Work to further contribute to the UPR continued during the second cycle of reviews. Notably, the Mahé Declaration of 2014, the Pipitea Declaration of 2015 and the Kotte Declaration of 2016 expressed the commitment of Commonwealth parliamentarians in Africa, the Pacific, and Asia, respectively, to increase engagement with the UPR and other international human rights mechanisms.<sup>3</sup> The most recent capacity-building workshop to this end was held in January 2016 in Sri Lanka for Commonwealth parliamentarians in Asia.<sup>4</sup>

The level of commitment by the Heads of Government to Commonwealth engagement with the international human rights mechanisms and the Council, particularly the UPR, has fluctuated somewhat. The Heads at the 2009 CHOGM in Trinidad and Tobago reaffirmed support for the capacity-building work of the Human Rights Unit.<sup>5</sup> However, at the 2011 CHOGM in Australia, the Heads merely noted that Commonwealth Members should share best practices and lessons learned from the Universal Periodic Review Process, without establishing a way forward for the Commonwealth to deliver further technical assistance.<sup>6</sup> The trend of diminishing focus in the CHOGM communiqué continued in 2013, where no reference to the Council or the UPR was made. The UN human rights mechanisms only received a sweeping mention wherein Members were encouraged to accelerate efforts towards the ratification of all major international human rights instruments to strengthen the implementation of rights and freedoms as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>7</sup> The 2015 CHOGM communiqué briefly noted the UPR as one source of best practices. It also ventured only mildly towards encouraging involvement in other international instruments, inviting States who “wished to do so” to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty and the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Commonwealth Secretariat, “Commonwealth Asia MPs Join Forces on Human Rights,” February 4, 2016, <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/commonwealth-asia-mps-join-forces-human-rights>.

<sup>4</sup> Commonwealth Secretariat, “Sri Lanka Hosts Commonwealth Regional Human Rights Seminar for Parliamentarians,” January 29, 2016, <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/press-release/sri-lanka-hosts-commonwealth-regional-human-rights-seminar-parliamentarians#sthash.dG7OqD6a.dpuf>.

<sup>5</sup> Commonwealth Heads of Government, “Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting Communiqué, Trinidad and Tobago 2009,” November 29, 2009, <http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/news-items/documents/TrinidadandTobagoCHOGMCommuniqué2009.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Commonwealth Heads of Government, “Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting Communiqué, Australia 2011,” October 30, 2011, <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/commonwealth-leaders-release-chogm-2011-communiqué%3%A9>.

<sup>7</sup> Commonwealth Heads of Government, “Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting Communiqué, Sri Lanka 2013,” November 17, 2013, [http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/events/documents/CHOGM%202013%20Communiqué\\_0.pdf](http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/events/documents/CHOGM%202013%20Communiqué_0.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Commonwealth Heads of Government, “Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting Communiqué, Malta 2015,” November 29, 2015, <http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/news-items/documents/CHOGM%202015%20Communiqué.pdf>.

The Commonwealth Secretary-General traditionally makes a speech during the opening of the Council, which can serve as a window onto the Secretariat's approach to engagement with that body. The Secretary-General in office from 2008 to early 2016, Kamalesh Sharma, delivered speeches that—while they at times defended fundamental human rights and liberties—differed markedly from those of his predecessor in their view of the proper role of the Council. Whereas Secretary-General Don McKinnon noted in his 2007 address that if the Council “shields just one jurisdiction which displays a blatant abuse of human rights, it will discredit itself forever”<sup>9</sup>, Secretary-General Sharma's speeches seem to suggest that naming and shaming rights-abusive regimes should be avoided. In 2010, for example, he said that there was “greater value in raising a helping hand, than in raising a wagging finger”<sup>10</sup>; in 2012, he stated that the “Commonwealth approach is not to chide or rebuke, but to agree to shared goals”<sup>11</sup>. In 2015, in a welcome move, his speech noted the Secretariat's concern over the safety of human rights defenders and threats to freedom of association and assembly.<sup>12</sup> His farewell speech to the Council, in 2016, focused heavily on networking and capacity-building efforts by the Commonwealth, but largely avoided sensitive civil and political rights issues and omitted mention of specific countries.<sup>13</sup> These statements largely mirrored the non-confrontational approach taken by the Secretariat in responding to human rights violations within member states. A notable exception to this pattern was in the Secretary-General's frequent call to end discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation, a laudable action given that the majority of Commonwealth countries continue to criminalise homosexuality.

Beyond these speeches, the institutional contacts between the Commonwealth and the Human Rights Council are relatively shallow—which should be a cause for concern. The Commonwealth considers itself a values-based organisation, defined by the principles of democracy, human rights, peace, tolerance and respect for the rule of law. If Commonwealth countries do not uphold these values, domestically or during their international engagements, the Commonwealth should be aware of this and take appropriate action. It is therefore essential that the Commonwealth

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<sup>9</sup> Don McKinnon, “Statement by the Commonwealth Secretary-General Rt Hon Don McKinnon to the High Level Segment of the UN Human Rights Council,” March 14, 2007, <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session4/HLS/Commonwealth.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> COMSEC/PACNEWS, “Commonwealth Secretary-General Addresses UN Human Rights Council,” February 3, 2010, <http://www.pina.com.fj/print.php?print=news&o=15361361914b8c7dcf54906a3a8e6a>.

<sup>11</sup> Kamalesh Sharma, “Commonwealth Secretary-General Speech to UN Human Rights Council – High Level Segment,” February 29, 2012, <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/commonwealth-secretary-general-speech-un-human-rights-council-%E2%80%93-high-level-segment>.

<sup>12</sup> Kamalesh Sharma, “Secretary-General Addresses UN Human Rights Council,” March 3, 2015, <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/secretary-general-un-human-rights-council>.

<sup>13</sup> Kamalesh Sharma, “Secretary-General to Address High-Level Segment of UN Human Rights Council,” March 2, 2016, <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/secretary-general-address-high-level-segment-un-human-rights-council#sthash.5uO1TB4d.dpuf>.

monitor action at the Council and work towards increasing the positive impact made by Commonwealth States at the Council. A significant initial move in that direction was completed in January 2011, when the Commonwealth opened an office in Geneva that offers space and a business centre at subsidised rates for Commonwealth missions and visiting delegations that participate in international deliberations, including at the Council.

In 2013, the Commonwealth took the step of contributing to a specific thematic panel discussion held at the Council on the role of parliamentarians in the work of the Council. Moreover, the staff of the Commonwealth contributed to specific thematic reports prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The reports, to which the Commonwealth contributed, included the policing of peaceful protests; strengthening judicial systems and the administration of justice; the right to development; and the protection of journalists. The Secretary-General in his 2016 statement underlined the association's on-going objective of assisting Commonwealth States participation in the UPR process and furthering the goals of the Council; however, the only specific pledge made in terms of direct participation at the Council was for Commonwealth involvement in a forthcoming panel on the contribution of parliaments to the work of the Council during the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session.<sup>14</sup>

There have been no visible moves by the Commonwealth, or any of its members, to work towards building a consensus among Commonwealth countries at the Council on interventions designed to advance human rights objectives. It is, of course, questionable whether a "Commonwealth consensus" at the Council could be achieved, given the wide variance in the human rights situations and political commitments of its members. Yet given the pro-human rights values at the heart of the Commonwealth, and the significant share of seats on the Council held by Commonwealth countries, working towards greater coordination would have significant potential benefits. An active Commonwealth group at the Council could both promote the Commonwealth's principles and help give it a higher international profile.

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<sup>14</sup> Kamallesh Sharma, "Secretary-General to Address High-Level Segment of UN Human Rights Council," March 2, 2016, <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/secretary-general-address-high-level-segment-un-human-rights-council#sthash.5uO1TB4d.dpuf>.



## THE COMMONWEALTH MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL AND THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

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### DO COMMONWEALTH MEMBERS OF THE HRC COMPLY WITH MAJOR UN HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS?

The tables below are designed to illustrate the extent to which the Commonwealth Members who sat on the Human Rights Council during the reporting period comply with core UN human rights instruments, mechanisms and processes. The tables focus on the ratification status of international human rights treaties (Table I); compliance with respect to reporting obligations under the UN human rights treaties (Table II); and engagement with the special procedures (Table III). Adherence to such instruments and mechanisms varies, demonstrating that the international framework established for the promotion and protection of human rights is not uniformly implemented across the Commonwealth Members of the Human Rights Council.

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### LIST OF CORE UN HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES

The core UN human rights treaties and their optional protocols that this section covers are:

- CERD - International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- CCPR - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- CCPR-OP1 - Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- CCPR-OP2-DP - Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming to the abolition of the death penalty.
- CESCR - International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- CESCR-OP - Optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- CEDAW-OP - Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- CAT - Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- CAT-OP - Optional Protocol of the Convention against Torture

- CRC - Convention on the Rights of the Child
- CRC-OP-AC - Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict
- CRC-OP-SC - Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography
- CRC-OP-CP- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure
- CMW - International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
- CED - Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance
- CRPD - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- CRPD-OP - Optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

TABLE 1: ADHERENCE OF COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES TO THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES (RATIFICATION STATUS)

	Bangladesh	Botswana	Ghana	India	Kenya	Maldives	Namibia	Nigeria	Pakistan	Sierra Leone	South Africa	United Kingdom
CERD	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
CCPR	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
CCPR-OP1	-	-	P	-	-	P	P	-	-	P	P	-
CCPR-OP2	-	-	-	-	-	-	P	-	-	-	P	P
CESCR	P	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
CESCR-OP	-	-	S	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	-
CEDAW	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
CEDAW-OP	P	P	P	-	-	P	P	P	-	S	P	P
CAT	P	P	P	S	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
CAT-OP	-	-	S	-	-	P	-	P	-	S	S	P
CRC	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
CRC-AC	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	S	P	P	P
CRC-SC	P	P	S	P	S	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
CRC-CP	-	-	S	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	-
CMW	P	-	P	-	-	-	-	P	-	S	-	-
CED	-	-	S	S	S	S	-	P	-	S	-	-
CRPD	P	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
CRPD-OP	P	-	P	-	-	-	P	P	-	-	P	P

KEY

- P State Party
- S Signatory
- No action

TABLE 2: COMPLIANCE OF COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES WITH REPORTING OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES

	Bangladesh	Botswana	Ghana	India	Kenya	Maldives	Namibia	Nigeria	Pakistan	Sierra Leone	South Africa	United Kingdom
CERD	OD (2002)	OD (2009)	OD (2006)	OD (2010)	UTD	UTD	UTD	OD (2008)	UTD	OD (2006)	UTD	UTD
CCPR	UTD	OD (2012)	UTD	OD (2001)	OD (2015)	OD (2015)	UTD	OD (1999)	UTD	UTD	UTD	UTD
CESCR	OD (2000)	-	OD (2003)	OD (2011)	UTD	OD (2008)	UTD	OD (2000)	UTD	OD (1998)	-	UTD
CEDAW	UTD	OD (2014)	UTD	UTD	UTD	UTD	UTD	UTD	UTD	UTD	OD (2015)	UTD
CAT	OD (1999)	OD (2001)	OD (2015)	-	UTD	OD (2005)	UTD	OD (2002)	UTD	UTD	OD (2009)	UTD
CRC	UTD	OD (2007)	UTD	UTD	UTD	UTD	UTD	UTD	UTD	UTD	UTD	UTD
CRC-AC	UTD	OD (2006)	-	UTD	OD (2004)	UTD	OD (2004)	OD (2014)	-	UTD	OD (2011)	UTD
CRC-SC	UTD	OD (2005)	-	UTD	-	UTD	OD (2004)	OD (2012)	OD (2013)	UTD	UTD	UTD
CMW	UTD	-	UTD	-	-	-	-	UTD	-	-	-	-
CED	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	OD (2013)	-	-	-	-
CRPD	OD (2010)	-	OD (2014)	UTD	UTD	OD (2012)	OD (2010)	OD (2012)	OD (2013)	OD (2012)	UTD	UTD

KEY  
 UTD Up to date  
 OD (2002) Overdue (report due date)  
 - N/A

TABLE 3: SPECIAL PROCEDURES: STANDING INVITATIONS, VISITS AND PENDING REQUESTS

	Bangladesh	Botswana	Ghana	India	Kenya	Maldives	Namibia	Nigeria	Pakistan	Sierra Leone	South Africa	United Kingdom
Standing Invitation?	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
Visits, 2014-mid-2016	Freedom of Religion	Cultural rights, Water and sanitation	Torture	NONE	Internally displaced persons, Water and sanitation	NONE	NONE	Minority issues	NONE	NONE	Violence against women	Violence against women, Eritrea, Promotion of truth justice, reparation and accountability and accountability of non-state actors
Pending requests	Minority issues, Extrajudicial executions	Racism, Migrants, Lauchaban	Migrants, Housing	Torture, Racism	Human rights defenders, Promotion of truth, justice, reparation and accountability of non-state actors	Human rights defenders	Transnational corporations	Freedom of assembly and association, Counter terrorism	Human rights defenders, Extrajudicial executions	Internally displaced persons, Arbitrary detention	Extrajudicial executions, Racism	NONE
	Independence of judges and lawyers, Contemporary forms of slavery, Racism		Housing	Embroid, disappearances, Indigenous people, Water and sanitation	Extreme poverty, Minority issues, Torture			Water and sanitation, Violence against women	Racism, Freedom of religion, Counter terrorism, Housing	Freedom of expression	Environment, Water and sanitation, Hazardous substances and waste, Extreme poverty	
	Internally displaced persons, International solidarity, Migrants, Freedom of assembly and association, Freedom of expression, Hazardous substances and waste			Extrajudicial executions, Independence of judges and lawyers, Trafficking, Freedom of assembly and association, Sale of children, People of African descent, Hazardous substances and waste, Extreme poverty, Contemporary forms of slavery, Cultural rights	Internally displaced persons, Hazardous substances and waste				Torture, Bond, Internally displaced persons, Freedom of assembly and association, Minority issues, Discrimination against women, Contemporary forms of slavery, Cultural rights			

# SIERRA LEONE AT THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

## BACKGROUND

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### ELECTION TO THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Sierra Leone was one of five African states that contested the November 2012 elections for the five seats vacant among the 13 seats reserved for Africa. Sierra Leone won a seat for the 2013-2015 term.

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### PRE-ELECTION PLEDGES

Prior to its election in 2015, Sierra Leone made both general, and country specific pledges. Sierra Leone made the following pledges:

- “Maintaining its integrity and commitment in the fulfilment of all obligations relating to the promotion and protection of human rights.
- Supporting the United Nations in its trend towards mainstreaming human rights as a mechanism for development.
- Reciprocating constructive developments by its peers in the furtherance of promotion and protection of human rights.
- Ensuring cooperation by way of extending an open invitation to all special procedure mandate holders for visits, communications and follow-up recommendations.
- Continuing to fulfil its obligations under treaty bodies by submitting reports to treaty bodies and cooperating with them.
- Contributing to international initiatives for the promotion and protection of human rights through the provision of human and technical resources.
- Maintaining maximum collaboration and cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR).
- Abiding by the principles of the United Nations (universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity) in its contributions to the deliberations in international human rights forums.

- Assuring the Human Rights Council of its full support by committing to engage constructively in all its deliberations, including those of its subsidiary bodies, mechanisms and special procedures.
- Affirming commitment to the universal periodic review process by ensuring that accepted recommendations are implemented.
- Committing to transparency and the meaningful engagement of non-governmental organizations in the Council.
- Sierra Leone will continue to ensure the promotion and protection of human rights guaranteed in its Constitution. In that regard, work is currently in progress to produce and institutionalize a national human rights action plan. A national Human Rights Commission has been established and it has acquired an “A” status accreditation from the International Criminal Court based on the commitment to prosecute perpetrators of human rights violations in the courts of Sierra Leone or the national Human Rights Commission by virtue of its statutory powers.
- Recognizing that the numerical strength of female representation in governance is poor, the Government, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), is committed to enacting legislation to provide for a 30 per cent quota for female representation.
- In its bid to mainstream human rights into all its policies, plans and programmes, Sierra Leone is currently implementing the Free Health Care Initiative launched in April 2007 for vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, lactating mothers and children under the age of 5, which is yielding the desired dividends.
- Notwithstanding the continued efforts to strengthen the justice sector with support from development partners, justice still remains widely inaccessible.
- Sierra Leone remains, however, committed to ensuring a better and more encompassing legal aid scheme, prompt and fair trials, review of juvenile delinquency and the codification of customary laws, with a view to making justice accessible to all.
- Sierra Leone continues to ensure adherence to all treaty obligations and guarantees the protection envisaged by the treaties through implementation and reporting.
- Cooperation and partnership with civil society organizations and the national Human Rights Commission has been strengthened in the area of protection and promotion of human rights.
- In addition to the Constitutional provision (Act No. 6, sect. 27), several enactments have been made to protect against and prevent discrimination in all its forms and manifestations.

- In spite of the many challenges, Sierra Leone reaffirms its commitment to respect both its international and its national obligations to protect and promote human rights and, accordingly, pledges to uphold the high standards already set by its laws and to introduce reforms in the law as and when necessary for the purpose of attaining the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights.”

## COMPLIANCE

### COMPLIANCE WITH PRE-ELECTION PLEDGES

In its pre-election pledge, Sierra Leone committed to engage constructively in the meetings of the Council, encourage the meaningful participation of non-governmental organizations in the Council’s work, support the UN’s mainstreaming of human rights as a mechanism for development, promote and protect human rights domestically and to cooperate with the OHCHR, the special procedure and the treaty bodies.

Sierra Leone was an active participant in the work of the Council. As noted in Section II.II, among the focus countries of this series, Sierra Leone had the highest average participation level of participation as measured by the Universal Rights Group during Sessions 23-31. It was particularly active in panel discussions, taking part in more than 55% of them, but also maintained a relatively high participation rate in Interactive Dialogues and general debates.

The country demonstrated a generally strong commitment to human rights in its voting record. It particularly stood out on the matter of country-specific resolutions. Although it abstained on a vote concerning human rights in the Syrian Golan, and multiple times on resolutions on Iran, it was one of a minority of Commonwealth countries willing to vote in favour of resolutions concerning human rights in other countries, including Syria, North Korea, Ukraine, Sri Lanka and Belarus. It also voted in favour of fundamental human rights, registering a yes vote on a resolution concerning the right to peaceful protest on which a number of other Commonwealth members either voted no or abstained. In its statements, Sierra Leone evinced particular concern over the freedoms of assembly and association, the protection of human rights defenders, the empowerment of women and the promotion of gender equity, the right of children and (in keeping with its own experience as a post-conflict society) the promotion of transitional justice processes.

Sierra Leone was one of a minority of Commonwealth countries on the Council to vote in favour of resolutions urging the implementation of moratoriums on and eventual abolition of the death penalty. During UPR sessions, it consistently urged countries that had not done so to implement moratoriums on the practice. It also stated it was considering moving towards full abolition domestically. Despite its stated commitment to fundamental human rights principles, however, the country abstained from voting on a resolution concerning the rights of LGBT persons and in favour of two resolutions on the “protection of the family” that were not LGBT-inclusive.

Sierra Leone affirmed its commitment to the Universal Periodic Review and pledged to engage constructively in all the deliberations of the Council. This was certainly visible in the country's participation in the UPR sessions; it submitted a statement for nearly every report considered. Further, these statements contained specific policy and treaty ratification recommendations and demonstrated significant concern had been given to each case.

The country pledged to cooperate with the Special Procedures of the Council and the treaty bodies, and to fulfil its international obligations. It had maintained a fairly good track record on submitting reports to the treaty bodies, but is overdue on submissions for CERD, CESCR and CRPD. It has a standing invitation to the Special Procedures mandate holders; though it did not receive any visits during the reporting period, it has three pending requests.

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## RATIFICATION

Sierra Leone is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

Sierra Leone has signed but not ratified the Optional Protocol to CAT, the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED), and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW).

Sierra Leone has not signed the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

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## REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

Sierra Leone has fulfilled most of its reporting obligations, having submitted all the required reports under CAT, ICCPR, CEDAW, CRC and both Optional Protocols to the CRC.

However, Sierra Leone has failed to submit the first round of reporting under ICESCR, which is overdue since 1998. Sierra Leone has also failed to submit its fourth round of reporting under CERD, due 2006, and its first round of reporting under CRPD, due 2012.

## VOTING PATTERNS AND PERFORMANCE AT THE COUNCIL

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### 25<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (3<sup>RD</sup> MARCH – 28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2014)

On 4 March 2014 during a **High Level Panel on Human Rights Mainstreaming and Promotion and Protection of the Human Rights of Migrants** Sierra Leone noted that during its 11-year conflict many of its citizen were forced to flee and seek refuge in other countries and while some countries granted asylum to Sierra Leoneans, in other countries they were subject to abuse and imprisonment. Sierra Leone appealed to the Council to prevent such blatant human rights violations from occurring in the future. It also noted that Sierra Leoneans who had resettled overseas found it difficult to aid development back home because of restriction on remittance of funds due to safeguards relating to money laundering and terrorism. It asked the UN to assist in such cases.

Also on 4 March 2014, during **High-level Dialogue with relevant United Nations entities on the promotion of preventive approaches within the UN system**, Sierra Leone stressed the importance of prevention in mitigating the risks of human rights violations. It stated that the country was currently undertaking a Constitutional Review Process, which it hoped would more comprehensively address the protection of human rights in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone expressed concern at the high level of youth unemployment in the country and that unless their social and economic rights were meet these youth risked becoming used as child soldiers.

On 5 March 2014, during the **High Level Segment**, Her Excellency. Ms. Ebum Strasser-King, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone expressed appreciation for the hard work and outstanding leadership of Navi Pillay and her team. Sierra Leone reported that at the close of that day's session the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSL) would have completed its mandate and their work transferred to the United Nations Country Team (UNCT). Sierra Leone praised the UPR as an essential element to the human rights work of the UN. It added that it was working closing with the special procedures mechanisms of the Council and it hoped to invite various Special Rapporteurs to Sierra Leone, noting that in 2013 the Special Rapporteur for freedom of religion and belief visited the country. Sierra Leone also expressed hope that other countries would respect its cultural practices, noting that while they may be harmful, forcibly imposing other belief systems can be counterproductive, and that consensus via education and raising awareness takes time. Sierra Leone commended the efforts of the African Union and the UN in the Central African Republic and Mali. Concerning poverty and access to healthcare the government of Sierra Leone was working on a number of policies in collaboration with local NGO's. Sierra Leone also noted a number of developments it had made in the area of economic, civil and political rights promotion. Lastly, Sierra Leone noted that protection of women against violence was a top priority of the government.



Also on 5 March 2014, Sierra Leone, during a **High Level Panel Discussion on the question of the death penalty**, reiterated its commitment to addressing the issue of the death penalty and noted that it had organized a conference with an NGO, Hands of the Coffin, which was held in Freetown in January 2014 and drew participants from across Africa. Sierra Leone acknowledged that it had not abolished the death penalty but it had had a moratorium on it since 1998, saying that the deterrent effect of the death penalty is still highly debated in Sierra Leone.

On 6 March 2014, after the annual Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General, during **Interactive dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights** Sierra Leone stated it was thankful for the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to address human rights after its 11-year war. Sierra Leone stated that it believed human rights needed to be mainstreamed in the work on the UN. Sierra Leone commended the efforts of the OHCHR on the rights of people with disabilities and reiterated its support of initiatives that promote gender equality and women's rights.

On 10 March 2014, during **Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur(SR) on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and with the SR on the situation of human rights defenders**, Sierra Leone aligned itself with the statement made by Ethiopia on behalf of the African Group and thanked both SRs. Sierra Leone highlighted the need for constructive dialogue between human rights defenders and States.

On 10 March 2014, during **Interactive Dialogue with the SR on the right to food and the SR on adequate housing**, Sierra Leone welcomed the report by the SR on the right to food and stated that resource management and preparedness were the key elements in addressing food crises caused by famine, crop destruction and natural disasters. Sierra Leone reiterated that it saw access to food as going hand in hand with human rights and suggested that governments encourage, through national initiatives, fisherman and farmers. The report by the SR on adequate housing Sierra Leone highlighted that the shift from rural to urban areas occurring in the country placed a significant amount of stress on the government to deliver ensure adequate housing.

Also on 10 March 2014, during **Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on human rights and environment**, Sierra Leone highlighted the need to avoid politicizing the issue of the environment and focus on developing disaster-reduction measures and enhancing institutional frameworks that better protect against environmental harm. Regarding the report by the Independent Expert on Foreign Debt Sierra Leone added that foreign and excessive debt burden States' capacity to actualize human rights and that the way forward was through constructive international dialogue.

On 11 March 2014, during the **Interactive Dialogue with the SR on freedom of religion or belief**, Sierra Leone thanked the SR for the visit to Sierra Leone and compiling the report. Sierra Leone noted that the SR has commended the culture of inter- and intra-religious openheartedness. Sierra Leone highlighted the role of religious communities and rebuilding the nation and promoting peace. On the issue of radicalization within the religious communities in Sierra Leone, the country

reiterated its commitment to ensuring that this issue is properly managed. Regarding the SRs comments on harmful cultural practices, notably the widespread belief in witchcraft, Sierra Leone expressed its commitment to properly consider the recommendations in the report of the SR.

On 13 March 2014, during the **Annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child: International norms and standards on access to justice for children and child-sensitive justice**, Sierra Leone drew attention to the barriers to children's access to justice outlined in the High Commissioner's report and stated that Sierra Leone was committed to ensuring each barrier is fully committed and children's access to justice improved.

On 18 March 2014, during the **Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic**, Sierra Leone called on all sides of the conflict to respect human rights and humanitarian law. It questioned how in this day and age the violence and suffering experienced by the victims of this conflict could be allowed to occur. Sierra Leone called on the Security Council to take necessary steps to end the suffering.

On 21 March 2014, during **general debate** Sierra Leone took the opportunity to express appreciation for the UPR process and highlighted the importance that observer states are not inadvertently excluded from participating in such reviews. Sierra Leone also expressed disappointment at missing out on the opportunity to participate in the 18<sup>th</sup> session of the UPR because it missed the registration deadline by 3 hours. It acknowledged the need to maintain discipline in drawing up the speaker list but asked that the situation of smaller delegations be kept in mind. Sierra Leone appealed to the Council and the OHCHR to consider reforming the system.

During the Session Sierra Leone **voted in favour** of the following resolutions:

- Resolution on promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka;
- Resolution on continuing grave deterioration of the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic;
- Resolution on impact of non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin to countries of origin;
- Resolution on situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea;
- Resolution on promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests;
- Resolution on promotion of a democratic and equitable international order;
- Resolution on Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt on the full enjoyment of all human rights;

- Resolution on ensuring use of remotely piloted aircraft in counter-terrorism in accordance with international law;
- Resolution of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination;
- Resolution on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan;
- Resolution on human rights situation in Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;
- Resolution on the follow-up to the report of the United Nations Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict;
- Resolution on human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan.

Sierra Leone did not **vote against** resolutions during this session.

Sierra Leone **abstained** from voting on the following resolutions:

- Resolution on integrity of the judicial system;
- Resolution on situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The following resolutions were **passed without a vote** during the Session, as they did not face any opposition from any member of the Council:

- Resolution on Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression;
- Resolution on enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights;
- Resolution on Strengthening the technical cooperation and advisory services in Guinea;
- Resolution on mandate of the Independent Expert on minority issues;
- Resolution on access to justice for children;
- Resolution on protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism;
- Resolution on the role of good governance in the promotion and protection of human rights;
- Resolution on ending violence against Children - A global call to make the Invisible visible;

- Resolution on the question of the realisation in all countries of economic, social and cultural rights;
- Resolution on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living;
- Resolution on freedom of religion or belief;
- Resolution on situation of human rights in Myanmar;
- Resolution on Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
- Resolution on the International Decade for People of African Descent;
- Resolution on Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders;
- Resolution on Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
- Resolution on the right to food;
- Resolution on Promotion of the enjoyment of the cultural rights of everyone and respect for cultural diversity;
- Resolution on the right to education of persons with disabilities;
- Resolution on Human Rights and the environment;
- Resolution on assistance to the Republic of Mali in the field of human rights;
- Resolution on technical assistance for Libya in the field of human rights;
- Resolution on intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization, discrimination against persons based on religion or belief.

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## 26<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (10<sup>TH</sup> – 27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2014)

On 10 June 2014, Sierra Leone commented on the **annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the office of the High Commissioner and Secretary-General**. Sierra Leone thanked the High Commissioner for her detailed update but

expressed disappointed at the failure of the international community to take action on recommendations. Sierra Leone expressed concern about the spread of terrorism, specially the actions of Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al Shabab in Somalia, Uganda and Kenya. Sierra Leone called on African governments to enhance efforts to promote religious tolerance and to combat violence against women.

On 10 June 2014, during a **dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of expression** and the **Special Rapporteur on peaceful assembly and association**, Sierra Leone affirmed its commitment to the right to freedom of opinion and expression. Sierra Leone emphasised the need for strong relations between the media and government to promote this ideal. Sierra Leone also offered its support to efforts aimed at promoting the right to peaceful assembly. Sierra Leone acknowledged the role played by civil society in the peace process and affirmed its commitment to the protection of these fundamental freedoms.

On 11 June 2014, during a **dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health** Sierra Leone expressed particular interest in findings relating to unhealthy diet and general health and wellbeing. Sierra Leone stated its belief that food security cannot be achieved without first tackling poverty, and that efforts must be directed to strengthening primary and preventative care. In the same discussion Sierra Leone commented on the **Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises**. Sierra Leone supported the establishment of better accountability mechanisms to address governance gaps, as well as enforcing normative standards at the local and international level.

On 12 June 2014, during a **dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences**, Sierra Leone declared its strong belief that discrimination, inequality and oppression of women are barriers to the full enjoyment of their right to life and one that is free from violence. In the same discussion, Sierra Leone also commented on the discussion regarding the **Special Rapporteur's report on extreme poverty and human rights**. Sierra Leone expressed its belief that poverty gaps will persist as long as sustainable and cohesive strategies fail to effectively channel funding in the development of programmes. According to Sierra Leone, poverty reduction is more effective when combined with investments in education, health and food security.

On 13 June 2014, during a **dialogue with the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity**, Sierra Leone congratulated the IE on her comprehensive and insightful draft declaration. Sierra Leone also commented on the discussion with the **Special Rapporteur on human trafficking in persons, especially women and children**. Although Sierra Leone acknowledged it is important that the label 'human trafficking' is not attached too quickly Sierra Leone concurred that human trafficking was a significant issue and listed the actions it would take to address this issue.

On 13 June 2014, in the dialogue with the **Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and**

**lawyers**, Sierra Leone confirmed its belief in the importance of a transparent and accountable national judiciary, as well as a free and fair judicial process. However, it also noted the challenge for many countries in ending impunity and ensuring judicial accountability. Sierra Leone also thanked the **Special Rapporteur on human rights and migrants** for his report. It expressed its concern about tough new immigration laws introduced by some western countries and a rise in xenophobia in certain European countries. Sierra Leone stressed the need to uphold the human rights of migrants, as some of the world's most vulnerable people.

On 16 June 2014, during a **high-level panel discussion on the identification of good practice in combatting female genital mutilation (FGM)**, Sierra Leone noted the prevalence of FGM in its own society and outlined measures it would take to try and minimise this practice.

On 16 June 2014, in a **working group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice**, Sierra Leone noted that high level education and skills are required for women to compete favourably with men. In the same dialogue, Sierra Leone commented on the report of the **Special Rapporteur on the right to education**. Sierra Leone highlighted some issues with the report such as the definition of 'basic education' and measuring the quality of education.

On 17 June 2014, during a discussion on the **impact of gender stereotypes on the recognition and enjoyment of women's human rights**, Sierra Leone noted the powerful, detrimental effect that gender stereotyping can have on the family, community and nation. Sierra Leone outlined the actions it was taking to overcome such stereotyping.

Also on 17 June 2014, during the **dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, Sierra Leone** focussed its comments on the worsening humanitarian crisis. It expressed its grave concern about the deprivation of civil and political rights as well as access to food.

Further on 17 June 2014, during the **annual full day discussion on women's rights**. Sierra Leone noted that the generalised nature of the specified goals meant vigilance was required in monitoring implementation.

On 19 June 2014, during the **consideration of New Zealand** Sierra Leone congratulated New Zealand on its commitment to the process and for accepting all recommendations relating to Indigenous Peoples.

Also on 19 June 2014, Sierra Leone participated in the **general debate on the annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary General**. Sierra Leone commented on the inter-linkage between the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), particularly in regards to the right to development. Sierra Leone noted that meeting the requirements of the ICCPR and the ICESCR on a sustained basis will be possible only when the country can set up and maintain the necessary mechanisms from its own resources obtained through socio-economic development.

Sierra Leone **voted in favour** of the following resolutions:

- Resolution on the question of the death penalty;
- Resolution on the mandate of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity;
- Resolution on the protection of the family;
- Resolution on human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms;
- Resolution on the continuing grave deterioration in the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab republic;
- Resolution on the situation of human rights in Belarus;
- Resolution on the promotion and protection of the human rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas;
- Resolution on cooperation and assistance to Ukraine in the field of human rights.

Sierra Leone did not **vote against** any resolutions during this Session.

Sierra Leone **abstained** from voting on the following resolutions:

- Resolution on the elaboration of an international legally binding instrument on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights.

The following resolutions were **passed without a vote** during the Session, as they did not face any opposition from any member of the Council:

- Resolution on the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent: draft programme of activities;
- Resolution on extreme poverty and human rights;
- Resolution on the protection of Roma;

- Resolution on the elimination of discrimination against women;
- Resolution on the Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers;
- Resolution on the Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children;
- Resolution on International Albinism Awareness Day;
- Resolution on the Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions;
- Resolution on the promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet;
- Resolution on human rights and arbitrary deprivation of nationality;
- Resolution on accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women: violence against women as a barrier to women's political and economic empowerment;
- Resolution on the right to education: follow-up to Human Rights Council resolution 8/4;
- Resolution on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health: sport and healthy lifestyles as contributing factors;
- Resolution on the human rights of migrants: mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants;
- Resolution on the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities;
- Resolution on the promotion of the right of migrants to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health;
- Resolution on Human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises;
- Resolution on the situation of human rights in Eritrea;
- Resolution on human rights and climate change;



- Resolution on the Social Forum;
- Resolution on the contribution of parliaments to the work of the Human Rights Council and its universal periodic review;
- Resolution on technical and capacity-building assistance for South Sudan in the field of human rights;
- Resolution on capacity-building and technical cooperation with Côte d'Ivoire in the field of human rights.

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## 27<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (8<sup>TH</sup> – 26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2014)

On 8 September 2014, during the discussion of the **update of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on his activities**, Sierra Leone noted their concern about protracted conflicts around the world and terrorism groups including Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al Shabab and Boko Haram. Sierra Leone also concurred with the view expressed in the update that the spread of Ebola illustrates the indivisibility and interrelatedness of human rights.

On 9 September 2014, at a **panel discussion on history teaching and memorialisation processes**, Sierra Leone noted that it was well placed to speak about the value of history teaching and education of its new generation on the causes and consequences of historical events in the country. Sierra Leone asserted that it was taking measures to ensure that its own history of civil war was not forgotten.

Also on 9 September 2014, during a dialogue with the **Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation**, Sierra Leone stated that there is a need to develop and disseminate qualitative and quantitative indicators to determine when the right to water is met, otherwise accountability would not be easy to establish. It noted that Sierra Leone was committed to providing access to clean and safe drinking water. At the same meeting, Sierra Leone made a statement during a dialogue with the **Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes**. It noted that governments should protect against the dumping of harmful waste in developing countries and should ensure that the unscrupulous importers are brought to justice.

On 10 September 2014, in a dialogue with the **Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence**, Sierra Leone noted that its development of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission following its civil war was evidence of its commitment to ensuring truth, justice and accountability for crimes. During the same meeting, in a dialogue with the **Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention**, Sierra Leone was adamant that national legal frameworks must be strengthened in order to better protect the rights of those deprived of their liberty.

On 12 September 2014, during a panel discussion on **the right to privacy in the digital age**, Sierra Leone noted that family was the nucleus of its society. However, Sierra Leone was adamant that it is up to each country to determine the definition of family and how best to address related issues.

On 15 September 2014, at a **dialogue on the report of IGWG (Intergovernmental Working Group on the right to development)**, Sierra Leone affirmed the importance of the right to development. It asserted its belief that a legally binding international instrument is crucial to advancing this right and fully establishing its inalienability, especially within the national and regional context. Sierra Leone acknowledged that the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the right to development, as with all other rights, lies with the state.

On 17 September 2014, during a dialogue on **indigenous people and the expert mechanism on the rights of indigenous peoples**, Sierra Leone referred particularly to the impact of climate change on the lives and rights of indigenous peoples. It is also specially noted that in order to ensure that the rights of indigenous peoples are not violated by businesses, governments should put in place appropriate legislation, particularly targeting abuse by unscrupulous businesses. Sierra Leone also supported the suggestion that indigenous peoples should be involved from the outset in formulating local development strategies and policy planning.

On 18 September 2014, in a statement not delivered due to lack of time during the **consideration of Norway**, Sierra Leone congratulated Norway on its cooperation in the UPR process. However it urged the Government of Norway to continue its consideration to ratify the optional protocols for the ICESCR and the CRC.

Also on 18 September 2014, in a statement not delivered due to lack of time during the **consideration of Democratic Republic of Congo** was not orally presented. However it included congratulations from Sierra Leone on its participation in the process and encouragement to continue its current efforts to bring perpetrators of human rights violations to justice, and to ensure a lasting peace for all its people.

Further, on 18 September 2014, at a panel discussion on the **role of prevention in the promotion and protection of human rights**, Sierra Leone stressed the need for poor countries to raise their level of development, thus putting them in a better position to meet their human rights obligations. It noted that awareness-raising is important as a preventative measure as some human rights abuses are inadvertently committed due to lack of awareness.

And, on 18 September 2014, during the **consideration of Cote d'Ivoire**, Sierra Leone commended Cote d'Ivoire on its acceptance of the 178 recommendations and its determination to implement them.

On 19 September 2014, at the **consideration of Dominica**, Sierra Leone acknowledged the many technical and resource constraints Dominica faces but commended their government for the willingness to further integrate human rights norms into their national system.

Also on 19 September 2014, at the **consideration of Equatorial Guinea**, Sierra Leone acknowledged that there would be challenges ahead in achieving 100 per cent implementation, is applauded the compliance of Equatorial Guinea with this process.

Further on 19 September 2014, at the **consideration of Ethiopia**, Sierra Leone commended Ethiopia on their implementation of the accepted recommendations since the first UPR cycle, including the ratification of the Optional Protocol on the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

On 23 September 2014, during the **panel on accelerating global efforts to end violence against children**, Sierra Leone stated that in order for States to further strengthen and enforce compliance with international human rights law, it is essential to develop and implement national policies dedicated to protecting children against physical and psychological violence. Sierra Leone noted its own legislative efforts to protect children from violence.

Also on 23 September 2014, during a **dialogue with the working group of experts on people of African descent**, Sierra Leone asserted that around the world, people of African descent continue to face economic hardships and difficulties integrating into other societies due to high incidence of marginalisation and social exclusion. Sierra Leone expressed its belief that although we may live in a post-colonial and post-apartheid world, many negative stereotypes persist. Sierra Leone expressed their believe that it is the responsibility of States to sensitise the new generation, and to make this painful and difficult history a part of the education curriculum.

On 25 September 2014 during the **general debate** Sierra Leone expressed its concern about the situation for women in Somalia and urged all parties to intensify efforts to end armed conflict, integrate peace initiatives and comprehensively address the needs of the internally displaced population.

Sierra Leone **voted in favour** of the following resolutions:

- Resolution on the right to development;
- Resolution on the mandate of the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order;
- Resolution on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the rights of peoples to self-determination;
- Resolution on the grave deterioration in the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic;
- Resolution on the promotion of the right to peace;
- Resolution on human rights and unilateral coercive measures;

- Resolution on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights: the activities of vulture funds.

Sierra Leone did not **vote against** any resolutions during this Session.

Sierra Leone **abstained** from voting on:

- Resolution on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity.

The following resolutions were **passed without a vote** during the Session, as they did not face any opposition from any member of the Council:

- Resolution on enforced or involuntary disappearances;
- Resolution on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence;
- Resolution on local government and human rights;
- Resolution on the safety of journalists;
- Resolution on realizing the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl;
- Resolution on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation;
- Resolution on promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal;
- Resolution on preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights;
- Resolution on the World Programme for Human Rights Education: adoption of the plan of action for the third phase;
- Resolution on human rights and indigenous peoples;
- Resolution on preventable mortality and morbidity of children under 5 years of age as a human rights concern;
- Resolution on the right of the child to engage in play and recreational activities;

- Resolution on the National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights;
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building for Yemen in the field of human rights;
- Resolution on the enhancement of technical cooperation and capacity-building in the field of human rights;
- Resolution on intensifying global efforts and sharing good practices to effectively eliminate female genital mutilation;
- Resolution on the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes;
- Resolution on equal participation in political and public affairs;
- Resolution on the mandate of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent;
- Resolution on national policies and human rights;
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building for human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building in the field of human rights in the Central African Republic;
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building to improve human rights in the Sudan; and
- Resolution on civil society space.

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## 28<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (2<sup>ND</sup> – 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015)

On 3 March 2015 Sierra Leone delivered a statement to the **Annual High-Level Panel on Human Rights Mainstreaming** stressing the importance of the right to development to the enjoyment and promotion of other rights. It underlined this point by discussing its recent experience with an outbreak of Ebola, during which fundamental rights had to be curtailed due in part to its under-resourced health system being unable to cope with the epidemic. It called for a human rights-

based approach to development, which would prevent future occurrences of similar disasters.

On 4 March 2015 during a **High Level Segment** Franklyn Bai Kargbo, Attorney General and Minister of Justice highlighted Sierra Leone's progress to implementing the recommendations of the TRC and UPR processes and the Constitutional Review Process, and also underlined the challenge the Ebola outbreak had posed to the country and its neighbours, including in the human rights arena. The Minister expressed concern over a number of conflicts and terrorist groups worldwide, especially the threat Boko Haram posed to Nigeria and neighbouring countries. The minister asserted religious intolerance was a major driver of conflict. He also urged that crimes such as rape and forced marriage of girls and women during conflict should be treated as crimes against humanity, and announced Sierra Leone's campaign for a second term on the Council to lead on these and other issues. The statement also encouraged the UN to devote more funds to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Also on 4 March 2015 during the **Biennial High-Level Panel Discussion on the question of the death penalty**, Minister Kargbo noted his country has had a moratorium in place since 1998 and was considering its abolition, although this required technical assistance. The Minister commended the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights' working group on the death penalty and pledged his country's support for abolition at the regional and national levels.

On 5 March 2015 during the **Interactive Dialogue with the Commissioner for the Presentation of the Annual Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**, Sierra Leone called for a more effective international effort against terrorism, expressed hope the Post-2015 Agenda would help mainstream human rights and link them to peace and security and development. It also asserted a rights-based approach to development would help address some of the fiscal limitations that made it difficult for the country's health system to confront Ebola.

On 9 March 2015 during the **Interactive Dialogues on human rights obligations related to a sustainable environment and the impact of international financial obligations on human rights**, Sierra Leone encouraged policies that involve more participation by individuals and businesses in protecting the environment, and described some its domestic policies to that effect. On debt, it raised concerns that attempts to stem illicit flows of money could hamper funding to the neediest countries, and opposed requiring human rights impact assessments for foreign investments.

Also on 9 March 2015 during the **Interactive Dialogues with the Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Food and Right to Adequate Housing** Sierra Leone outlined its efforts to ensure housing, including through local authorities, despite the devastating effects of its civil war. It also described its efforts to improve access to food and said there was a need to clarify the responsibilities of States and corporations related to the Right to Food.

Also on 9 March 2015 during the **Interactive Dialogues with the Special Rapporteurs on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and on the situation of human rights defenders** Sierra Leone noted widespread concern over the safety of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and said there had to be constant discourse on the issue as well as legislation to

protect HRDs. The representative also agreed with the content of the Rapporteur on Torture's report, particularly on the need to protect children's rights.

On 10 March 2015 during the **Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion** Sierra Leone expressed concern over religious intolerance and pointed to its own experience as an example of the importance of interfaith dialogue. It said more must be done to identify the causes of intolerance and called for the criminalization of incitement to hatred.

Also on 10 March 2015 during the **Annual Interactive Debate on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** Sierra Leone said it had domesticated the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and urged States to not put this issue on the back burner in the name of austerity or financial constraints.

On 11 March 2015 during the **Interactive Dialogues with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict** Sierra Leone said it believed the UN Model Strategies would help provide guidance on protecting children within the criminal justice system. It supported collective efforts to prevent the violation of child rights in armed conflict and to bring perpetrators of violations to justice.

On 12 March 2015 during the **Annual Full-Day Meeting on the rights of the child: "Towards better investment in the rights of the child"** Sierra Leone said it was important to consider the rights of the child in terms of not just child-specific issues but all the themes addressed by the Council, from debt to the environment to religious tolerance. It recommended every special procedure consider the child rights impact of its mandate, and urged States to follow its lead in incorporating the Convention on the Rights of the Child into domestic law.

On 18 March 2015 during **consideration of Italy** Sierra Leone urged Italy to adopt the recommendations it had been given, as it had not done so, and encouraged the country to provide further information related to racism and violence against women.

Also on 18 March 2015 during the **consideration of El Salvador** Sierra Leone thanked the country for supporting several of its recommendations and commended its efforts to further protections for children's rights.

Additionally, on 18 March 2015 during **general debate** Sierra Leone opposed putting a moratorium on new mandates and urged a review of existing ones to determine their relevance. It said the special procedures had to be better coordinated with States. It expressed hope the special procedures would positively influence the SDG development process and said the Council had to address the lack of resources and reprisals against collaborators that are the biggest challenges to the special procedures.

Further, on 18 March 2015 during the **consideration of Bolivia** Sierra Leone thanked Bolivia for accepting its recommendations. It commended Bolivia for working on gender-related issues, and

encouraged it to focus especially on violence against women and the sexual abuse of girls.

Also on 18 March 2015 during the **consideration of Fiji** Sierra Leone commended Fiji for accepting the majority of recommendations it had received, included all those submitted by Sierra Leone.

Additionally, on 18 March 2015 during the **consideration of San Marino** Sierra Leone praised the country's dedication to human rights and urged it to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW) and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED).

On 19 March 2015 during the **consideration of Kazakhstan** Sierra Leone thanked Kazakhstan for accepting its recommendations and urged the country to ratify the International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ICRMW) and the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, aimed at abolishing capital punishment.

Also on 19 March 2015 during the **consideration of Angola** thanked Angola for accepting its recommendations and urged it to create a national human rights institution and offer a standing invitation to all Special Procedures of the Council.

Additionally, on 19 March 2015 during the **consideration of Iran** Sierra Leone thanked Iran for accepting many of the recommendations it had been given but hoped it would give consideration to imposing a moratorium on the death penalty.

Also on 19 March 2015 in a statement not delivered due to a lack of time during the **consideration of Iraq** Sierra Leone thanked Iraq for its participation in the UPR process and noted the concerns it had raised previously over the conflict in the country, social services and discrimination against women, children, persons with disabilities and minority groups. It also urged Iraq to establish a moratorium on the death penalty with an eye towards its elimination.

In addition, on 19 March 2015 during the **consideration of Madagascar** Sierra Leone said Madagascar had accepted most recommendations and expressed confidence it would implement those it had accepted, though it also noted Madagascar had not responded to recommendations related to freedom of expression and engaging human rights defenders.

Also on 19 March 2015 during the **consideration of Slovenia** Sierra Leone noted the country had a robust human rights framework but had yet to adopt any recommendations made to it and urged it to combat violence against women and children.

On 20 March 2015 in a statement not delivered due to lack of time during the **consideration of Egypt** Sierra Leone thanked Egypt for its engagement but expressed disappointment its own recommendations had not been taken up by the country. It urged Egypt to enact those it had accepted, including recommendations regarding freedom of expression and religious dialogue and tolerance.



Also on 20 March 2015 during the **consideration of Bosnia and Herzegovina** Sierra Leone thanked Bosnia and Herzegovina for its positive engagement, called upon the country to accept all the recommendations it had received and to continue working to improve human rights in the country.

On 26 March 2015 during the **consideration of Gambia** Sierra Leone noted with concern Gambia had not accepted any of its recommendations and urged the country to accept the recommendations it had been given, including raising the marriage age to 18 to combat child marriage.

Sierra Leone **voted in favour** of the following resolutions:

- Resolution on ensuring use of remotely piloted aircraft or armed drones in counter-terrorism and military operations in accordance with international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law;
- Resolution on the negative impact of the non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin to the countries of origin on the enjoyment of human rights, and the importance of improving international cooperation;
- Resolution on the renewal of the mandate of the open-ended intergovernmental working group to consider the possibility of elaborating an international regulatory framework on the regulation, monitoring and oversight of the activities of private military and security companies;
- Resolution on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights;
- Resolution on human rights, democracy and the rule of law;
- Resolution on the effects of terrorism on the enjoyment of human rights;
- Resolution on the continuing grave deterioration in the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic;
- Resolution on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea;
- Resolution on the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination;
- Resolution on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan;
- Resolution on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

Sierra Leone did not **vote against** any resolutions this Session.

Sierra Leone **abstained** from voting on:

- Resolution on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran;
- Resolution on human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan.

The following resolutions were **passed without a vote** during the Session, as they did not face any opposition from any member of the Council:

- Resolution on the right to work;
- Resolution on the right to privacy in the digital age;
- Resolution on freedom of religion or belief;
- Resolution on the rights of the child: towards better investment in the rights of the child;
- Resolution on the situation of human rights in Myanmar;
- Resolution on contribution of the Human Rights Council to the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem of 2016;
- Resolution on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief;
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building to improve human rights in Libya;
- *Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building for Mali in the field of human rights*;
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building in strengthening human rights in Iraq in the light of the abuses committed by Daesh and associated terrorist groups;
- *Resolution on strengthening of technical cooperation and consultative services in Guinea*;
- Resolution on prevention of genocide.

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## 29<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE – 3<sup>RD</sup> JULY 2015)

On 15 June 2015 during the **Update by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights** Sierra Leone said it had had to curtail certain rights in order to protect lives during the Ebola outbreak. It raised concerns over terrorist groups in Africa and the rights of migrants. It expressed hope the OHCHR field offices would continue to provide technical assistance on the continent despite budgetary constraints and applauded initiatives to raise awareness of the issues faced by people with albinism. It also said it hoped more could be done to address the development needs of Africa through the post-2015 framework.

Also on 15 June 2015 during the **Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the human rights of migrants** Sierra Leone said there is an urgent need for proper analysis of the crisis in order to address its causes; there is currently a deficit in understanding migrant motivations, smuggler networks and other aspects of the issue. It said shorter-term solutions would include making legal migration earlier, for example through the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Migration Waiver being negotiated at the World Trade Organization, while longer-term solutions involved securing the right to development along with other economic and social rights.

Additionally, on 15 June 2015 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants and the Special Rapporteur on minority issues** Sierra Leone said it was concerned about the safety of migrants at sea and encouraged broader search and rescue efforts. It was also concerned about increasing criminalization and stigmatization of migrants. It voiced support for efforts to protect the rights of the Roma in Europe, including ensuring access to education and healthcare.

On 16 June 2015 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons** Sierra Leone said due diligence policies should be created and followed by all transnational corporations and trade and investment agreements should be more transparent. It encouraged both States and corporations should implement the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. On trafficking, it said challenges like porous borders, poverty, lack of awareness and detection mechanisms needed to be addressed with technical assistance and supported the SR's plan to research these issues in different settings.

Also on 16 June 2015 during the **Panel on realizing the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl** Sierra Leone said educating girls was a priority but economic, social and cultural barriers had to be overcome to achieve universal education. It said it was committed to ensuring education domestically and working with international partners to make sure all girls had their rights protected.

On 17 June 2015 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and the Special Rapporteur on internally displaced persons** Sierra Leone supported the SR's call to have a binding legal instrument to address violence against women and said that as part of the UPR process States should draw up Plans of Action on the issue. It also said it wished the SR had focused more on violence against women in conflict. It said States should also develop Plans of Action regarding IDPs and that IDP issues would be included in the SDGs.

On 18 June 2015 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of expression and the Special Rapporteur on peaceful assembly and association** Sierra Leone said safeguards and limitations must be placed on encryption to protect the rights of others, public safety and specific government interests. It also stated States were responsible for protecting individuals' privacy against interference or attacks. It said States should protect rights of assembly and association from violations by businesses, create an enabling legal environment to guarantee the rights of communities in which businesses operate and listen to protestors. To this end, it voiced support for the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Also on 18 June 2015 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right to education and the Independent Expert on International Solidarity** Sierra Leone said affordability and accessibility of education were key issues and, while parents had the right to choose schools for their children, safeguards needed to exist to ensure schools were not primarily profit-making enterprises. Sierra Leone guarantees the right to education constitutionally and

makes financial assistance available for families in need. On international solidarity, Sierra Leone said it was important the post-2015 development initiatives be guided by human rights standards, and noted its appreciation for both the immediate and long-term infrastructural assistance it had received as a result of the Ebola outbreak.

On 19 June 2015 during the **Panel on women's human rights and participation in power and decision-making** Sierra Leone said that fighting gender stereotyping began in childhood and successful women should do more to showcase their achievements and share their experiences. It said women should be encouraged to take up male-dominated professions and quotas might be necessary to make sure women are placed in decision-making positions. It also said men played an important role in combatting patriarchy, misogyny and structural inequalities.

On 22 June 2015 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on summary executions and the Working Group on discrimination against women** Sierra Leone agreed with the SR that information technologies could help investigations but their use had to be regulated, and asked the SR how information on the internet could be verified. On violence against women, it underlined the point that public awareness and sensitization of families and communities was essential.

Also on 22 June 2015 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and the Special Rapporteur on countering terrorism** Sierra Leone said individuals must have access to equal opportunities and experience could be learned from countries with low inequality. It asked the SR on countering terrorism to comment on curbs to human rights that might be necessary to fight ISIL and noted self-defence was an exception to the prohibition on the use of force in the UN Charter, although such actions had to comply with international law. It also called for ISIL perpetrators to be brought to justice.

Additionally, on 22 June 2015 during **General Debate on the HC/SG thematic reports** Sierra Leone said it was concerned about the indicators for the SDGs, which need to be comprehensive and said LDCs to development catalysts, not handouts. It stated it was working to achieve the development goals but required assistance and understanding.

On 24 June 2015 during the **consideration of Kyrgyzstan** Sierra Leone thanked the country for taking on many recommendations including all of Sierra Leone's. It particularly noted Kyrgyzstan's work to end child marriage and strengthen the judiciary and the rule of law.

Also on 24 June 2015 during the **consideration of Guinea** Sierra Leone noted the country's establishment of a ministry dealing with human rights and public liberties and noted the Ebola outbreak had taken priority for Guinea in the past year. It however urged the country to consider the recommendations it had been given for future implementation and supported Guinea's call for technical, political and institutional assistance.

On 25 June 2015 during the **consideration of Lao PDR** Sierra Leone noted that the Lao PDR had said it had integrated recommendations from the second cycle of its review into national norms

and policies, and had worked to reduce poverty. Sierra Leone hoped the country would support further recommendations including adopting the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers.

Further, on 25 June 2015 during the **consideration of Spain** Sierra Leone commended the country's efforts to confront hate crimes, discrimination and human trafficking, reform the penal code and criminalize forced marriage. It also noted the country's intent to create a new national human rights plan incorporating recommendations it had received, and said it hoped Spain would incorporate the recommendations it had accepted into law.

Also on 25 June 2015 during the **consideration of Lesotho** Sierra Leone said it appreciated that Lesotho had ratified several human rights instruments since its last review and established a national human rights commission, and thanked it for having accepted all the recommendations made by Sierra Leone.

Additionally, on 25 June 2015 in a statement not delivered due to lack of time during the **consideration of Kenya** Sierra Leone commended the country's efforts to improve access to justice and ensure access to social and economic rights for the poor and vulnerable. It thanked Kenya for accepting several of Sierra Leone's recommendations but encouraged it to ratify human rights instruments it was not yet party to including the ICRMW and the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW.

Further, on 25 June 2015 during the **consideration of Guinea-Bissau** Sierra Leone said the country had worked to implement norms to protect human rights despite significant recent political challenges. It commended the adoption of FGM legislation and the creation of a strategic plan to eliminate gender based-violence. It encouraged the country to develop its education infrastructure to provide free, basic education for all, particularly girls and vulnerable communities.

On 26 June 2015 during the **consideration of Sweden** Sierra Leone thanked the country for accepting most of its recommendations and commended its efforts to combat suicide. It urged Sweden to integrate the CRC into national legislation and consider ratifying the Optional Protocol of the CRC, the ICPPED and the OP-ICESCR.

Also on 26 June 2015 during the **consideration of Grenada** Sierra Leone commended the steps the country had made on human rights, including through constitutional reforms, the Child Protection Act and the Education Act. Sierra Leone noted Grenada had been attentive to many of the recommendations made to it and encouraged Grenada to implement the proposals that best matched its national concerns, such as climate change

Further, on 26 June 2015 during the **consideration of Turkey** Sierra Leone thanked Turkey for its commitment to human rights and noted with interest its intent to establish a human rights mechanism. It was pleased to note Turkey had accepted many recommendations including all those from Sierra Leone and urged Turkey to implement them and if possible integrate them into judicial reform processes.

Additionally, on 26 June 2015 during the **consideration of Kuwait** Sierra Leone commended the creation of the National Assembly's Committee for the Defence of Human Rights and the country's intent to create a national human rights institution, as well as its work on humanitarian assistance. Given the many migrant workers in the country, Sierra Leone urged it to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. On 29 June 2015 during **general debate** Sierra Leone said the Post-2015 Agenda was comprehensive and aligned with the Vienna Programme of Action. It recalled that the Vienna Programme called on the international community to support LDCs committed to democratization and economic reform, and that the realization of the right to development required cooperation a favourable international economic environment and economic relations and effective development policies at the national level.

On 30 June 2015 during the **Panel discussion on the effects of terrorism on the enjoyment by all persons of human rights and fundamental freedoms** Sierra Leone said it was necessary to understand the origins, motivations and funding of terrorist groups. It said the right to self-defence in the UN Charter applied to an imminent risk of an armed attack and that terrorists should be hunted down and brought to justice. It said the human rights of terrorists should not come at the expense of innocent victims and said the international community had to speak with one voice on terrorism in all forms and in every part of the world.

On 1 July 2015 during the **Interactive Dialogue on the OHCHR oral update on Boko Haram** Sierra Leone said terror had massive cross-cutting implications for safety, human rights and development. It expressed its condolences to victims of recent global terror attacks and said there had to be international cooperation to disrupt terrorist activities, block their funding and bring them to justice. It also commended the efforts by the African Union Commission and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to address some of the security challenges in countries affected by Boko Haram.

Also on 1 July 2015 during the **general debate** Sierra Leone stressed the importance of technical assistance, citing its own post-civil war experience as an example. It noted with concern the shortfall in the 2014 technical assistance budget and urged donors to contribute more generously to the fund.

Additionally, on 1 July 2015 during the **consideration of Kiribati** Sierra Leone said it wished Kiribati had provided more detail on its intention to implement some of the recommendations it had received in the prior cycle, but commended its stated intent to continue working with the OHCHR to strengthen human rights. It also appreciated its creation of a coalition of nations most vulnerable to climate change and its call for the international community to help them mitigate the effects and dangers of climate change.

Sierra Leone **voted in favour** of the following resolutions:

- Human rights and international solidarity;
- Human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms;

- The grave; and deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic
- Situation of human rights in Belarus;
- Protection of the family: contribution of the family to the realization of the right to an adequate standard of living for its members, particularly through its role in poverty eradication and achieving sustainable development;
- Cooperation and assistance to Ukraine in the field of human rights;
- Ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

Sierra Leone did not **vote against** any resolutions this Session.

Sierra Leone did not **abstain from voting** on any resolutions this Session.

The following resolutions were **passed without a vote** during the Session, as they did not face any opposition from any member of the Council:

- Resolution on the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption and the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the International Covenants on Human Rights;
- Resolution on the protection of the human rights of migrants: migrants in transit;
- Resolution on the elimination of discrimination against women;
- Resolution on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members;
- Resolution on the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, jurors and assessors, and the independence of lawyers;
- Resolution on the right to education;
- Resolution on strengthening efforts to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage;
- Resolution on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism;
- Resolution on the negative impact of corruption on the enjoyment of human rights;
- Resolution on unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents and human rights;
- Resolution on the Mission by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to improve human rights, accountability and reconciliation in South Sudan;
- Resolution on accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women: eliminating domestic violence;

- Resolution on human rights and climate change;
- Resolution on the situation of human rights in Eritrea;
- Resolution on the Social Forum;
- Resolution on the incompatibility between democracy and racism;
- Resolution on the situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar;
- Resolution on capacity-building and technical cooperation with Côte d'Ivoire in the field of human rights.

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### 30<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (14<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER TO 2<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2015)

On 15 September 2015 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Rapporteur of the working group on arbitrary detention and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery** Sierra Leone said the best approach to preventing arbitrary detention was to ensure national investigative procedures were compliant with international human rights instruments and followed. It noted the legal framework to this effect in Sierra Leone. On slavery, it said corporations and third party stakeholders had a role to play and should abide by human rights standards, and that a collaborative, multi-stakeholder effort to eradicate slavery in supply chains was the best way forward.

Also on 15 September 2015 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation & guarantees of non-recurrence and the Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances** Sierra Leone noted its history with transitional justice processes and said compulsory birth registrations, clarifying citizenship laws and truth commissions had been essential. It agreed culture and education played an important role in reconstruction and underlined it was the State's role to ensure due process in transitional justice settings. On enforced disappearances, Sierra Leone said they continued to be a significant problem and said States should adopt and strengthen measures to prevent them.

Additionally, on 15 September 2015 during the **annual discussion on the integration of a gender perspective throughout the work of the Human Rights Council and that of its mechanisms** Sierra Leone said the social and economic inclusion of women was essential and should be pursued aggressively; it supported measures including quotas to narrow gender disparities. It encouraged the acceleration of gender balance in human rights bodies and said gender parity should continue to form an essential part of the post-2015 agenda.

On 16 September 2015 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on the rights of older persons and the Working Group on the use of mercenaries** Sierra Leone agreed with the need to foster an age-inclusive society and said that, while it had made efforts to ensure social security, the report of the IE included best practices that would serve as useful tools to assess the country's model. On mercenaries, Sierra Leone welcomed a discussion on a new



international convention to set standards of accountability but said the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries should be reviewed to see if the WG report's recommendations could be included in it.

Also on 16 September 2015 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes and the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation** Sierra Leone said detailed study of systems and the socio-economic dynamic was needed to ensure affordable water and sanitation and welcomed the recommendations of the report as a first step towards guaranteeing the right to water and sanitation. On hazardous waste, Sierra Leone noted the emphasis in the SR's report on the importance of information in ensuring transparency and accountability. It said it would analyse and consider implementing the reports recommendations.

On 17 September 2015 during the **Biennial panel discussion on unilateral coercive measures and human rights** Sierra Leone said unilateral coercive measures were a human rights violation and were disruptive to both international relations and efforts to meet development goals. It said human rights mechanisms should delimit the scope of the practice and when coercive measures are taken, steps should be taken to avoid socio-economic and humanitarian consequences. It asked the panel how consequences of sanctions on civilian populations could be avoided.

On 22 September 2015 during the **annual half-day discussion on the rights of indigenous peoples** Sierra Leone said it appreciated the panel focused on violence against women and girls, a particular concern of the country. It stated that the root cause of violations must be addressed and indigenous people allowed pursue economic, social and cultural development as well as civil and political rights. It also said any expansion to the Expert Mechanism's mandate should allow a broader integration of ways to further clarify issues which would enable States to better integrate indigenous human rights promotion into national laws.

On 24 September 2015 during the **Consideration of Belarus** Sierra Leone commended Belarus for accepting a high number of recommendations including many by Sierra Leone but encouraged it to consider a moratorium on the death penalty. It also commended the country for inviting the Special Procedures mechanism and hoped it would receive a response.

Also on 24 September 2015 during the **consideration of the United States of America** Sierra Leone said it appreciated the US' open engagement but was disappointed at its lukewarm response to many recommendations. It also noted the US did not support Sierra Leone's recommendation to create a centralized human rights institution and suggested it look at best practices from other federal States.

Additionally, on 24 September 2015 during the **consideration of Malawi** Sierra Leone commended Malawi for supporting many recommendations including those from Sierra Leone. It applauded Malawi's moratorium on the death penalty and encouraged it to implement Sierra Leone's

recommendations regarding equal and free access to primary education and the criminalization of all forms of trafficking.

Further on 24 September 2015 during the **Panel on good governance in public service** Sierra Leone underlined some of its efforts to improve governance and asked how to improve its Ombudsman's office. It also recommended human rights training for officials be incorporated into training programmes.

Also on 24 September 2015 during the **consideration of Mongolia** Sierra Leone said Mongolia had accepted 150 recommendations including most of those from Sierra Leone, had ratified several key international human rights instruments and had committed to ratifying the Optional Protocol to the CAT. It commended Mongolia's moratorium on the death penalty and pardon of death sentences and encouraged it to move towards full abolition.

And, on 24 September 2015 during the **consideration of Panama** Sierra Leone noted Panama had accepted three of its recommendations and urged it to consider ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and their Families.

Further, on 24 September 2015 in a statement not delivered due to lack of time during the **consideration of Maldives** Sierra Leone noted the country's standing invitation to Special Procedures mandate holders, its signatory status to seven of the nine core UN human rights instruments, and its recently approved gender equality bill, which was in line with CEDAW. It also noted Maldives had accepted two of Sierra Leone's recommendations and acceded to the Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

On 25 September 2015 during the **consideration of Andorra** Sierra Leone noted Andorra's progress on children's rights and barring corporal punishment. It remained concerned regarding racial intolerance and discrimination against women. It urged it to sign the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons and create a national human rights institution, enact laws on refugees and asylum seekers and protect children with disabilities.

Also on 25 September 2015 during the **consideration of Bulgaria** Sierra Leone noted the country had submitted a voluntary mid-term report highlighting its work to strengthen institutional and legislative protections for human rights. It commended Bulgaria for judicial reforms and anti-trafficking measures and urged it to implement policies to prevent violence against ethnic and religious minorities. It also encouraged Bulgaria to intensify efforts to combat gender stereotyping and promote gender equality.

Further on 25 September 2015 during the **consideration of Honduras** Sierra Leone noted Honduras had implemented 106 out of 129 recommendations received since 2012, including those from Sierra Leone on encouraging participation of marginalized communities, implementing laws prohibiting hate crimes against women of African descent, instituting standards aimed at eliminating domestic violence and protecting human rights defenders.

Also on 25 September 2015 during the **consideration of Liberia** Sierra Leone commended the country's efforts to integrate human rights standards into the national legal framework. It noted Liberia had been challenged by the Ebola outbreak and urged the international community to help it rebuild its health system and rehabilitate Ebola survivors. It encouraged Liberia to implement strategies to prevent child rape.

Additionally, on 25 September 2015 during the **consideration of Marshall Islands** Sierra Leone noted efforts by the country to adopt human rights standards, including through the National Strategic Plan of 2015 – 2017, the National Policy on Disability Inclusive Development, the human rights commission bill and the child protection bill. Sierra Leone noted the impact climate change was having on the region and Marshall Islands' ability to implement human rights norms but urged it to implement Sierra Leone's recommendations, including preventing child marriages.

Also on 25 September 2015 during the **consideration of Croatia** Sierra Leone noted Croatia's four ombudswomen dedicated to human rights promotion and its national plan for human rights promotion. It encouraged Croatia to do more to address trafficking and commended its awareness programmes on the issue. It encouraged Croatia to consider ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, to do more to grant asylum and protect unaccompanied migrant children and address hate crimes with a view towards standardizing criminalization of the practice.

Further, on 25 September 2015 during the **Outcome of Jamaica** Sierra Leone applauded Jamaica's steps to guarantee fundamental freedoms through the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. It encouraged Jamaica to seek assistance to address the effects of climate change, to establish a moratorium on the death penalty and to ratify the Convention against Torture and International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances.

On 30 September 2015 during the **OHCHR report on Sri Lanka** Sierra Leone commended the new Sri Lankan government for its willingness to engage in dialogue and good practices such as the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission. It encouraged Sri Lanka to harmonize its laws with international norms and to continue to engage. It said it was important the country be supported in setting up a truth and reconciliation commission, that a special court for investigating alleged human rights abuses and war crimes should be established, and that support should be given to the country to help rebuild both infrastructure and its human rights framework.

On 1 October 2015 during **general debate** Sierra Leone underlined the importance of technical assistance and asked the Council what could be done about persistent financial constraints on its work on crucial human rights priorities. It also asked what could be done to not forget on-going conflicts and how the Council can stop countries from denying access to experts and failing to implement recommendations. It also said the OHCHR report on Boko Haram failed to portray sufficiently the urgency of stopping the group's abuses and urged the international community to provide more robust support to affected countries.

Sierra Leone **voted in favour** of the following resolutions:

- Human rights and unilateral coercive measures;
- The question of the death penalty;
- The use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination;
- The grave and deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic;
- Promotion of the right to peace;
- Promotion and protection of the human rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas;
- Human rights and preventing and countering violent extremism;
- From rhetoric to reality: a global call for concrete action against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
- Forum on people of African descent in the diaspora.

Sierra Leone did not **vote against** any resolutions this Session.

Sierra Leone did not **abstain from voting** on any resolutions this Session.

The following resolutions were **passed without a vote** during the Session, as they did not face any opposition from any member of the Council:

- Resolution on promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka;
- Resolution on regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights;
- Resolution on human rights and indigenous peoples;
- Resolution on human rights in the administration of justice, including juvenile justice;
- Resolution on the contribution of the Human Rights Council to the high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS in 2016;
- Resolution on equal participation in political and public affairs;
- Resolution on the review of the mandate of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- Resolution on the contribution of parliaments to the work of the Human Rights Council and its Universal Periodic Review;
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building for Yemen in the field of human rights;
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building in the field of human rights in the Central African Republic;
- Resolution on assistance to Somalia in the field of human rights;
- Resolution on enhancement of technical cooperation and capacity-building in the field of human rights;
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building to improve human rights in the field of human rights;

rights in the Sudan;

- Resolution on advisory services and technical assistance for Cambodia;
- Resolution on national policies and human rights;
- Resolution on promoting international cooperation to support national human rights follow-up systems and processes;
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building for human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- Resolution on technical cooperation and capacity-building for Burundi in the field of human rights.

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### 31<sup>ST</sup> REGULAR SESSION (29<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY TO 24<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2016)

*Note: Sierra Leone's term on the Council concluded in 2015. The statements below were made in its capacity as an observer, not a voting member.*

On 2 March 2016 during the **High level segment** H.E. Mr. Mohammed Gibril Sesay, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Sierra Leone talked about the many challenges to realising human rights including culture and politics. It was encouraged by newfound attention to women's rights, children's rights and the right to development. It said conflict and the Ebola outbreak had not dampened its commitment to rights and reforms. It noted its active role in the UPR and said it would stand for election to the Council for 2017-2019 because it was a link between human rights commitments and partnerships which would foster the promotion and sustainable implementation of rights.

On 3 March 2016 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the prevention of genocide and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders** Sierra Leone said human rights defenders had to be protected and noted their vital role in promoting and protecting human rights and civil freedoms. It said governments should implement targeted measures to protect women defenders, who often face more serious threats to their safety. It asked the SR to provide some examples of how countries could develop strategies incorporating "a holistic definition of security" and noted that technical and financial constraints often made it difficult for countries to meet their obligation to protect HRDs.

On 4 March 2016 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities and the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights of persons with albinism** Sierra Leone said governments and local policy-makers needed the technical capacity and policy space to allow broad and inclusive participation by persons with disabilities. On albinism, Sierra Leone said awareness-raising and access to justice were good starting places but addressing the root causes of discrimination and eliminating impunity for attackers had to be the main focus. It said more had to be done to educate, debunk myths, promote inclusion and eliminate discrimination in the application of other rights.

On 7 March 2016 during the **Annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child** Sierra Leone said it was alarmed at exploitation of children through information technologies and said international frameworks must be put in place to reduce the risk for children. It said it was important to ensure no havens for bullying, sexual solicitation and exploitation could exist and that perpetrators were swiftly and severely prosecuted. It said a safe environment could be achieved if governments cooperated with all stakeholders including the private sector.

Also on 7 March 2016 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and the Special Rapporteur on the right to food** Sierra Leone said heavy financial obligations affected States' ability to fully promote all human rights. It said equitable income distribution, better wealth management and strategies to improve trade would create a shift in debt management and how foreign investment is managed nationally. On food, Sierra Leone said it was important to clarify the definition of nutrition and that government capacity was an issue difficult to address without external assistance. It concurred that poverty, lower wages and patriarchal mindsets were barriers to women's nutrition and encouraged women's participation in decision making at the policy and household levels.

On 8 March 2016 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography** Sierra Leone said all people had the right to live without torture and ill-treatment and noted its work domestically to prevent these from occurring. It agreed with the SR on the sale of children that children must be regarded as rights holders regardless of gender. It said it was crucial for States to work together to develop deterrents and to punish offenders. It said facilitators of trafficking must also be held accountable.

On 16 March 2016 during the **consideration of Micronesia** Sierra Leone said it was encouraged by the creation of a Human Rights/UPR Task Force, and commended the country for its work to protect the rights of women and children. It urged Micronesia to raise the age of consent to 18.

Also on 16 March 2016 during the **consideration of Nauru** Sierra Leone said it was encouraged by the country's willingness to engage with the international human rights mechanisms and partners, including on the issue of climate change. It urged Nauru to consider constitutional amendments with the aim of abolishing the death penalty.

Additionally, on 16 March 2016 during the **consideration of Rwanda** Sierra Leone said it was pleased Rwanda had accepted some of its recommendations but urged it to take steps to eliminate child, early, and forced marriage, as well as to ratify and domesticate the ICPED.

Further on 16 March 2016 during the **consideration of Nepal** Sierra Leone commended Nepal's disaster response and noted that the country had accepted several recommendations, including three from Sierra Leone.

Also on 16 March 2016 during the **consideration of Austria** Sierra Leone said it was pleased Austria had accepted all Sierra Leone's recommendations during its review cycle, had responded

commendably to the refugee crisis and had revised its hate crime laws in line with international instruments. It expressed confidence Austria would work to close the pay gap and encouraged it to develop a comprehensive strategy and work with others to end trafficking.

On 17 March 2016 during the **consideration of Australia** Sierra Leone commended Australia for establishing a National Plan to reduce violence against women and children, committing resources to ending domestic violence, and assisting victims and indigenous women. While it was encouraged by Australia's commitment to assisting refugees from Iraq and Syria it urged it to consider reassessing its border protection policies and off-shore asylum-seeking procedures.

Also on 17 March 2016 during the **consideration of Georgia** Sierra Leone commended Georgia for accepting a large majority of recommendations and restricting the age of marriage to 18.

Further, on 17 March 2016 during the **consideration of St. Lucia** Sierra Leone commended the country for its commitment to fundamental freedoms, addressing environmental degradation and seeking assistance with climate change mitigation. It encouraged St. Lucia to ratify and domesticate international human rights instruments, including the ICCPR and the CAT.

Also on 17 March 2016 in a statement not delivered due to lack of time during the **consideration of Oman** Sierra Leone said it was unclear which recommendations Oman supported. It commended Oman for addressing trafficking and violence against women and children. It urged Oman to ratify the ICESCR and ICCPR and promote equal citizenship rights.

Additionally, on 17 March 2016 during the **consideration of Myanmar** Sierra Leone said it appreciated Myanmar's acceptance of three out of four recommendations made by Sierra Leone. It commended Myanmar's national reconciliation process and urged it to aim for inclusive dialogue, political stability and establishing legitimate accountability. It also encouraged Myanmar to establish a moratorium on the death penalty.

Further, on 17 March 2016 during the **consideration of Saint Kitts and Nevis** Sierra Leone noted the country had accepted more than half of the recommendations it had received, including one of the three from Sierra Leone. It urged Saint Kitts and Nevis to raise the age of criminal responsibility to 18 and to institute a moratorium on the death penalty.

Also on 17 March 2016 during the **panel discussion of the Human Rights Council on the human rights dimensions of preventing and countering violent extremism** Sierra Leone said it was necessary to address the root causes of violent extremism. It said States had a responsibility to address and mitigate this phenomenon, including through public awareness, counselling, early detection of radicalisation and prosecuting those responsible for radicalization. It asked the panel how best to inclusively pool regional counter-radicalization efforts.

On 18 March 2016 during the **consideration of Sao Tome and Principe** Sierra Leone said it was encouraged by the country's willingness to ratify international human rights instruments, its acceptance of most recommendations put to it (including all those from Sierra Leone), and its

efforts to improve its economic situation. Sierra Leone recommended the country raise the marriage age to 18.

On 22 March 2016 during the **Interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Central African Republic** Sierra Leone expressed concern over the underfunding of the humanitarian appeal and the lack of DDR programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed fighters, which it said were essential to meaningfully addressing the human rights situation.



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### LINKS TO COUNTRY PLEDGES

Botswana: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/65/732&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/65/732&Lang=E)

India: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/65/758&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/65/758&Lang=E)

Namibia: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/522](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/522)

Pakistan: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/486](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/486)

Sierra Leone: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/531](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/531)

## VOTING RECORDS OF COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES AT THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, SESSION 25-31

### 25<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (3-28 MARCH 2014)

Resolution	Asian Group			African Group					W. Euro. Group
	India	Maldives	Pakistan	Botswana	Kenya	Namibia	Sierra Leone	South Africa	United Kingdom
Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka	ABST	NO	NO	YES	NO	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Integrity of the judicial system	YES	ABST	YES	YES	ABST	YES	YES	YES	ABST
The negative impact of the non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin to the countries of origin on the enjoyment of human rights, and the importance of improving international cooperation	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST
Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Mandate of the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Ensuring use of remotely piloted aircraft or armed drones in counter-terrorism and military operations in accordance with international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	YES	NO
The continuing grave deterioration of the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran	NO	-	NO	YES	ABST	ABST	ABST	ABST	YES
Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	ABST	YES	NO	YES	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Right of the Palestinian people to self-determination	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Human rights situation in Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Follow-up to the report of the United Nations Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST
The promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	ABST	YES	NO	YES

26<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (10<sup>TH</sup> -27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2014)

Resolution	Asian Group			African Group					W. Euro. Group
	India	Maldives	Pakistan	Botswana	Kenya	Namibia	Sierra Leone	South Africa	United Kingdom
The question of the death penalty	NO	ABST	NO	NO	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES
Mandate of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Elaboration of an international legally binding instrument on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights	YES	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	YES	ABST	YES	NO
Protection of the family	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
The continuing grave deterioration in the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	-	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Situation of human rights in Belarus	NO	YES	ABST	YES	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Promotion and protection of the human rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas	YES	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Cooperation and assistance to Ukraine in the field of human rights	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES

-----27<sup>th</sup>

REGULAR SESSION (8<sup>TH</sup> TO 26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2014)

Resolution	Asian Group			African Group					W. Euro. Group
	India	Maldives	Pakistan	Botswana	Kenya	Namibia	Sierra Leone	South Africa	United Kingdom
The right to development	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST
Mandate of the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
The use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
The continuing grave deterioration in the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Promotion of the right to peace	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Human rights and unilateral coercive measures	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights: the activities of vulture funds	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity	ABST	NO	NO	NO	NO	ABST	ABST	YES	YES

28<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (2 TO 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015)

Resolution	Asian Group				African Group							W. Euro. Group
	Bangladesh	India	Maldives	Pakistan	Botswana	Ghana	Kenya	Namibia	Nigeria	Sierra Leone	South Africa	United Kingdom
Composition of staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Ensuring use of remotely piloted aircraft or armed drones in counter-terrorism and military operations in accordance with international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law	ABST	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
The negative impact of the non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin to the countries of origin on the enjoyment of human rights, and the importance of improving international cooperation	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST
Renewal of the mandate of the open-ended intergovernmental working group to consider the possibility of elaborating an international regulatory framework on the regulation, monitoring and oversight of the activities of private military and security companies	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
The effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Human rights, democracy and the rule of law	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Effects of terrorism on the enjoyment of human rights	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	YES	NO	NO
The continuing grave deterioration in the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	YES	ABST	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran	NO	NO	ABST	NO	YES	ABST	ABST	ABST	ABST	ABST	ABST	YES
Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	YES	ABST	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	ABST	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	ABST
Right of the Palestinian people to self-determination	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

29<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (JUNE 15<sup>TH</sup> TO 3<sup>RD</sup> JULY 2015)

Resolution	Asian Group				African Group							W. Euro. Group
	Bangladesh	India	Maldives	Pakistan	Botswana	Ghana	Kenya	Namibia	Nigeria	Sierra Leone	South Africa	United Kingdom
Human rights and international solidarity	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST
The grave and deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	YES	ABST	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Situation of human rights in Belarus	ABST	NO	YES	ABST	YES	ABST	ABST	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Protection of the family, contribution of the family to the realization of the right to an adequate standard of living for its members, particularly through its role in poverty eradication and achieving sustainable development	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO
Cooperation and assistance to Ukraine in the field of human rights	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem	YES	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

30<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (14<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER TO 2<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2015)

Resolution	Asian Group				African Group							W. Euro. Group
	Bangladesh	India	Maldives	Pakistan	Botswana	Ghana	Kenya	Namibia	Nigeria	Sierra Leone	South Africa	United Kingdom
Human rights and unilateral coercive measures	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
The question of the death penalty	NO	NO	ABST	NO	NO	ABST	ABST	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
The use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
The grave and deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	YES	ABST	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Promotion of the right to peace	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Promotion and protection of the human rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST
Human rights and preventing and countering violent extremism	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	YES	NO	YES
From rhetoric to reality: a global call for concrete action against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO*	YES	YES	YES	NO
Forum on people of African descent in the diaspora	YES	YES	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Right to development	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO

\* The delegation of Namibia subsequently stated that there had been an error in its voting and that it had intended to vote in favour of the draft text.

31<sup>ST</sup> REGULAR SESSION (29<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY TO 24<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2016)

Resolution	Asian Group			African Group						W. Euro. Group
	Bangladesh	India	Maldives	Botswana	Ghana	Kenya	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	United Kingdom
Composition of staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
The effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
The human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic	ABST	ABST	YES	YES	YES	ABST	ABST	ABST	ABST	YES
Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran	NO	NO	ABST	YES	ABST	NO	ABST	ABST	NO	YES
The negative impact of the non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin to the countries of origin on the enjoyment of human rights, and the importance of improving international cooperation	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST
Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Effects of terrorism on the enjoyment of all human rights	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	NO	NO
Protecting human rights defenders, whether individuals, groups or organs of society, addressing economic, social and cultural rights	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	ABST	NO	YES	YES
Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem	YES	YES	YES	ABST	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem	YES	ABST	YES	ABST	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
The promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	ABST	ABST	YES
Commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST